August 19, 2005

Mr. Jack O'Connell
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
1430 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

Dear Mr. O'Connell:

My daughter, [redacted], who has been in RSP-Special Day Classes since the third grade, is now a Special Day Class student at [redacted] Unified School District and is presently entering her senior year at [redacted] High School.

She has made two sincere attempts at taking the Algebra 1a-1b high school math requirement for graduation within the RSP classes, but she was unable to process the information and retain the mathematical concepts needed to be successful at passing the class with even a letter grade of C. She received a C minus for Algebra 1a the fall semester of 2003.

[redacted] test scores on the CAHSEE for the year of 2004 are (Mathematics 316 and Language Arts 328) and for the year 2005 are (Mathematics 308 and Language Arts 348). As you can see, she is very close to passing both requirements. However, due to the fact that [redacted] cannot pass the Algebra math requirement because she is mentally challenged, [redacted] High School has not made any attempt in placing her into a CAHSEE remediation class(es) so that she can at least pass the CAHSEE. In other words, there is no incentive or obligation for [redacted] High School to assist [redacted] in getting a high school diploma and this is not providing my child a fair and equal educational opportunity in obtaining a high school diploma. Instead, [redacted] has to receive a high school certificate of completion, which will affect her self-esteem, by a public school system who is punishing her for the mental handicap she was born with and for her not being a main-stream student, and this is being humanly insensitive to my child who has a learning disability and has special needs.

I would sincerely suggest that you review, reconsider, and re-evaluate the high school graduation requirements for children with learning disabilities and special needs. It is unfair, unjust, and an inequality for RSP students to have to meet the same difficult, stringent, and rigorous requirements that main-stream students have to meet. RSP students should also have a fair and equal educational opportunity to receive a high school diploma because if a school of higher learning or employer needs to know the state's tests taken and scores, academic courses taken and grades, the student's transcript is always readily available for scrutiny.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and I hope to hear from you soon.

Very truly yours,

[redacted]
[redacted]
Laguna Hills, CA [redacted]
[redacted]

cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
Dr. Alice D. Parker, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Special Education
Mr. Bill Habermehl, Superintendent, Orange County Department of Education
Dr. Steven Fish, Superintendent of Saddleback Valley USD
Dr. Ronna Martin, Director of Special Education, Saddleback Valley USD